

Minutes

Walkersville Planning Commission Workshop

June 8, 2021

Commission Chairman David Ennis called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with members Dick Brady, Ray Santullo, Mike Kuster, Tom Gilbert, Russ Winch and Michelle Doster present. The meeting was also live-streamed on the Town's Facebook page.

1. Comprehensive Plan workshop: Old Town area

Commission members continued their discussion of possibly adding to new zoning district, Old Town-Residential and Old Town -Commercial to be applied to the Old Town area and to replace the current Old Town Mixed Use District.

Member Winch reviewed the history of the OTM District and noted that property owners with OTM zoning are required to get site plan approval from the Planning Commission and submit to a number of performance standards. Member Kuster noted that there are home based businesses on properties zoned R-3 that do not meet the OTM performance standards. He supports requiring more uses to be subject to Special Exception approval.

Member Winch also recalled that when the OTM was established, a number of property owners objected to the change, so the resulting zoning map is not always consistent. Chairman Ennis noted that there seems to be confusion among residents of Old Town about the zoning. Mr. Winch thought that public outreach communication could solve that issue.

Planner Hauver reviewed a chart showing the uses permitted within each zoning district. Chairman Ennis suggested that they take the charts home and review them before the next meeting.

2. Comprehensive Plan background: Water Resources, Transportation, Schools

Planner Hauver reviewed background information that will be incorporated into the Plan update text.

Mr. Jeremy Holder, Ausherman Development, gave the Commission members his insights on the County sewer system and the status of the Ceresville pump station. He said that the system had been improved and the bottleneck that affected the Ceresville plant had been relieved by improvements to the system. There is capacity at the pump station.

Mr. Holder also reviewed the handout with background data that he gave to the Commission members. He noted that the Town does not provide all the services that support new development since sewer service and schools are provided by Frederick County. He said if the Town allows the Stone property to develop they would submit an alternative zoning approach that minimizes the financial burden of the infrastructure.

In response to a question, Mr. Holder said that they are not absolutely opposed to commercial development on the Stone property. However, they do not think an expansion of retail uses in Town would be economically viable.

Member Doster noted that the development of the commercial centers planned in the Jefferson Tech Park and the Linganore Town Center has also lagged behind the residential development in those areas due to the lack of an anchor store. Mr. Holder cited the example of the commercial center in the Whittier development that has struggled to remain viable.

Mr. Bruce Dean, attorney representing the Stone property, also shared information about an annexation in Thurmont where it was reported that commercial zoning would not be viable.

3. Announcements

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Hauver